

Armenia Declines to Extradite Russian Soldier Who Refused to Fight in Ukraine

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Semyon Subbotin. **Human rights organization**

Armenian police have prevented Russian military officials from seizing a former Russian soldier who fled the country after refusing to serve in Ukraine, the exiled news outlet Novaya Gazeta Europa [reported](#) Monday, citing anonymous human rights activists.

Semyon Subbotin, a former member of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces, fled to Armenia in September 2024 after being placed on Russia's wanted list for desertion. He had been living without legal status in Armenia after an international arrest warrant was issued against him.

Last week, Subbotin learned that Russian military officials had arrived in Armenia to forcibly return him to Russia. He voluntarily approached police in Yerevan for protection.

Armenian authorities detained him for the mandatory 72-hour period pending a formal extradition request from Moscow, which Russia failed to submit.

Russian officials reportedly attempted to collect Subbotin directly from the detention facility

without following official procedures, raising alarms among local human rights groups about a potential kidnapping attempt.

Related article: ['We Have Our Own Gestapo': A Russian Military Deserter Recalls His Time Inside a Secret Jail for Defectors](#)

Armenian police denied the officials access, and Subbotin was released into the care of his lawyer after the detention period expired.

He remains free in Armenia while awaiting possible formal extradition proceedings.

“The police are acting professionally and their actions are aimed at preventing Subbotin’s illegal removal,” human rights activists told Novaya Gazeta Europa.

Asmik Novikova, an expert with the Russian human rights group Public Verdict, [told](#) the exiled Mediazona news website that Russia has 40 days to submit an extradition request for Subbotin.

Subbotin is one of many Russian soldiers who fled to Armenia to avoid being sent to fight in Ukraine.

In 2023, Armenian courts [rejected](#) Russia’s extradition request for deserter Yuri Trostyansky, who was subsequently released.

But in a separate case, Russian military police in Armenia [seized](#) and repatriated another deserter, Dmitry Setrakov, prompting [condemnation](#) from Armenian officials.

Tigran Balayan, Armenia's ambassador to the European Union, [told](#) The Moscow Times that this transfer violated existing legal agreements between the nations.

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